

NEWS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - December 21, 2005

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced that Omar Abdi Mohamed was sentenced yesterday in U.S. District Court in San Diego by United States District Judge John A. Houston to serve 18 months in custody, followed by three years of supervised release, on each of six counts of immigration and naturalization fraud. The sentences on all counts are to run concurrently. Judge Houston also imposed a \$600 special assessment fee.

According to the evidence presented at trial and at the sentencing hearing, Mohamed is a citizen of Somalia who came to the United States, via Canada, in 1995 on a religious worker's visa. He applied for United States citizenship and was interviewed pursuant to that application. The jury found that Mohamed lied when he failed to disclose his longtime employment with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Mohamed also was found to have lied when he falsely told immigration officers that he worked for the Masjidul Taqwa, a San Diego-based mosque, and when he concealed the existence of his child in Australia.

At the sentencing hearing, Judge Houston identified specific factors on which he based Mohamed's sentence. First, the Judge expressed concern over Mohamed's affiliation with both the Global Relief Foundation and the Al-Haramain Foundation, two "charities" which have been listed as Specially Designated Global Terrorists by the United States Treasury Department. Judge Houston also found that Mohamed received more than \$300,000 from these organizations, which was deposited into bank accounts under his control and then sent overseas, without any record of how the funds were being used.

Second, Judge Houston noted Mohamed's failure to disclose his employment with the Ministry of Religious Affairs for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Judge Houston cited Mohamed's role in gathering information for the Saudi government as circumstance which took the case out of the heartland of cases and made it "exceptional" for sentencing purposes.

Finally, Judge Houston expressed concern about Mohamed's ability to travel the world, and support two families on two different continents, all on a part-time teacher's salary.

Mohamed has been in custody since his arrest in January 2004, and is expected to be immediately remanded into immigration custody where he will await deportation proceedings.

DEFENDANT

Omar Abdi Mohamed

SUMMARY OF KEY CHARGES

False Statement in Connection with Immigration Application, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1546(a)

False Statement in Matter Relating to Naturalization, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1015(a)

Maximum Penalties: Five years in prison; \$250,000 fine

AGENCIES

Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security
Federal Bureau of Investigation